



# *The Commonwealth of Massachusetts*

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### **ENVIRONMENTAL SECRETARY HERZFELDER ANNOUNCES NEW OFFICE OF PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS**

*Office will strengthen bonds with parks groups, pursue new funding sources*

Environmental Affairs Secretary Ellen Roy Herzfelder today announced the creation of a new Office of Public/Private Partnerships (OPPP) within the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA). The new office will establish and sustain public-private partnerships, generate community support while exploring new sources of revenue for the parks system.

“Today we move one step closer to realizing our vision of a world-class parks and recreation system,” said Secretary Herzfelder. “The Office of Public/Private Partnerships will reinforce our links to current partners and seek to create new ones with those who are passionate about parks.”

The Office of Public/Private Partnerships has set three immediate goals:

- **Identify and cultivate Friends Groups for every Department of Conservation and Recreation facility in the Commonwealth.**
- **Through increased community involvement, create a culture of shared responsibility and transparent decision-making in parks management.**
- **Pursue new revenue sources for state parks.**

To head the new office, which will combine and coordinate a range of existing initiatives, Secretary Herzfelder has named public-private partnership development expert Betsy Shure Gross. Ms. Shure Gross has over 30 years' experience in creating partnerships for environmental protection, historic landscape preservation and community projects. Ms. Shure Gross currently serves as Special Assistant for Community Preservation at EOEA. *-more-*

“I am honored and delighted to accept this new leadership challenge to create new models of stewardship for the lands held in trust by the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs,” said Shure Gross. “Together, we will build relationships that will lead to a new standard in managing and maintaining our public lands.”

The Office of Public/Private Partnerships will not require additional taxpayer funds and will streamline and improve current procedures for generating private funds for public resources such as parks.

The event was held at the Gloucester Dock on the Esplanade in Boston. The dock is being refurbished thanks to assistance from one of EOEA’s existing friends groups, the Esplanade Association.

“Our successes working with EOEA on improving the Esplanade reflect the powerful impact that public-private partnerships can have on restoring and improving the care of parklands,” said Esplanade Association co-president Jeryl Oristaglio. “We applaud Secretary Herzfelder's initiative to establish an Office of Public/Private Partnerships to facilitate the creation of more of these effective partnerships.”

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